

Vijāya Dashamī

Festivals in the Vedic (Hindu) culture are all multi-faceted, with (i) worldly, (ii) ritualized and (iii) spiritual aspects.

It is customary for people to thoroughly clean houses, business and working areas, as well as places of worship. The bright decorations, new clothes, fragrance of the vapors from [havan-yajna-pooja](#), the colors and flavors of special dishes and sweets as well as the moments of rejoicing add to the charm of social and cultural bonding.

As human beings we need to understand and live up to the spiritual aspects. Thus, festivals serve to brighten our physical-mental-emotional-spiritual frames, and give a boost to the positive vibrations of human personality, body-mind-spirit, as well as character-deeds-innate temperament ([guna](#), [karma](#), [svabhāva](#)). *These are what elevates us to “humane social beings”, else we shall only be “social animals”.*

Vijāya Dashamī celebrates the victory of good over evil. The real transformation occurs only when internal ignorance is destroyed. *Vijāya Dashamī is also the victory of Knowledge over the ignorance.* True knowledge ([satya vidyā](#), [shuddha jñāna](#)) leads to truthfulness in deeds ([shuddha karma](#)) and devotion ([shuddha bhakti-upāsnā](#)).

The customary celebrations of Vijāya Dashamī are only external. In daily life, punishment is meted out to a wrongdoer; a jail sentence only temporarily suppresses the physical environment to sin. In the absence of efficient and effective reform programs, that person becomes a repeated offender.

The internal victory only is real and permanent. Likewise, the 9-10 day spiritually charged moments are indeed opportunities to embark on the real transformation of the soul which takes place only when the internal ignorance is destroyed by the knowledge. Else our celebrations of historical events and mythology would be as good as driving forward as we focus only in the rear mirror.

Knowledge is 'Durga' when it protects us from the attacks of ignorant thoughts. In spiritual terms, ignorance (*avidyā*) relates to the ignorance of the permanence of the soul and the finality is *moksha-mukti* - an outcome which is solely on merits trading on the path of *shuddha jnāna-karma-bhakti-upāsnā*. The concept that *jnāna*, *karma*, *bhakti* as different paths is nowhere in the Vedas, Upanishads, Valmiki Ramāyana and Vyāsa Gīta. It's always a blend of *jnāna*, *karma*, *bhakti* in life. Imagine Shri Rām or Arjun going into the battle with only *jnāna*, or only *karma*, or only *bhakti* ...the outcome would have been otherwise in both the Ramāyana and the Mahabhārata.

Let's emulate Shri Rām and Arjun who came out victorious with a blend of *jnana*, *karma*, and *bhakti*. Else, we'll suffer the fate of the exemplary warrior Abhimanyu who entered the chakravayuh, unaware of how to come out of it.

Vijāya Dashamī is a call to rise above the "I" referring solely to the body, and adopt the holistic concept of body-mind-spirit.

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